

CHART SUTTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 8TH MARCH 2021 VIA ZOOM VIDEO CONFERENCE

PRESENT: - Cllr S Waring in the Chair, together with Cllrs V Underdown, P Ward, C Webb, M FitzGerald MBE, P Forknall and Miss T Jenkins, Clerk.

IN ATTENDANCE: - Borough Cllr S Munford was present until item 15.2. County Cllr E Hotson was present from item 14.1 until item 15.6.

PUBLIC OPEN SESSION

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr P McLoughlin.

2. FILMING OF MEETINGS

There were no requests for notification of whether anyone intends to film, photograph or record any items.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr FitzGerald declared an interest for item 15.4 as a recipient of two cheques. Cllr Waring declared an interest for item 11. Cllrs Waring & Underdown declared an interest for item 15.4, as members of the Shop Committee (re cheque 101651).

4. REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

There were no requests for dispensation.

5. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 25TH JANUARY 2021

Cllrs proposed, seconded and resolved **“that the draft Minutes be approved as a correct record”**. This was **Agreed** and the Chairman was authorised to sign off the official copy.

6. POLICE MATTERS

PCSO Gardner reported that two cat converters had been stolen from vehicles in Orchard Bank in January, there were no reported crimes in February.

7. COMMUNITY TOGETHER INITIATIVE

Members **Noted** that the remaining balance of vouchers issued under the first phase of the MBC Winter Grant (£120) have been redeemed in the Community Shop, and a cheque has therefore been issued in reimbursement. A further cheque for £65.00 has been issued to Cllr FitzGerald regarding the printing costs of the leaflets distributed to all households and vouchers issued. Cllr FitzGerald provided a report on both the Community Together Initiative and the Winter Grant. Cllrs proposed, seconded and resolved that **“the Community Together Initiative be formally ended on 31st March”**. This was **Agreed**. Cllr FitzGerald will write to Zone co-ordinators and will put a notice in the Village Newsletter. A huge thank you goes out to all of the volunteers and supporters of this initiative, which will continue to be reviewed in need. The second phase of the Winter Grant has seen £420 in vouchers issued, to be redeemed by 23rd March.

8. ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Members discussed the Annual Parish Meeting. It was **Noted** that as social distancing rules will still be in place, it will not be possible to meet ‘face to face’. It was further **Noted** that a zoom meeting would not be viable, as not everyone will have internet access. Cllrs therefore proposed, seconded and resolved that **“the 2021 Annual Parish Meeting be cancelled”**. This was **Agreed**.

9. FOOTBALL PITCH

Members discussed the outstanding football fees. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic/limited matches played, it was **Agreed** that Coxheath and Maidstone Inter would not be asked to pay their 2nd half fees. Cllrs proposed, seconded and resolved that **“Bearsted FC be offered a refund, or to roll over the payment of their 2nd half fees to next season”**. This was **Agreed**. The Clerk was asked to request Landscape Services to re-mark the pitch in time for the re-start of matches.

10. DITCHES

Members discussed the problem with blocked ditches within the parish. It was **Noted** that Norton Road floods regularly, and despite contact with Highways, the ditches are still blocked, and the culvert has not been cleared. The Clerk was asked to contact Eric Hotson for assistance in getting these works escalated. Cllrs also agreed to let the Clerk know of any other ditches that need clearing, in order to ask Highways to contact the relevant landowners for clearance.

11. PLAY AREA

Following the recent annual inspection report, Cllr Waring agreed to obtain a quote for some of the minor repairs/repainting as highlighted in the report. Cllr Waring has ordered new chains for the swings. Cllr Waring has cut back the trees to the side and has cleared the debris on the rubber matting. Members **Agreed** that it was not necessary to padlock the service gate, as suggested in the report. It was **Agreed** to put down some rubber matting where it has worn away under the smaller gate, to see if this resolves the issue. Cllr Waring to look into obtaining a new sign for the entrance to the field, as per the report. Cllrs proposed, seconded and resolved that **“Cllr Waring raises an invoice for the works carried out, together with costs for replacing the fencing at the boundary with the nearby field”**. This was **Agreed**.

12. PAVILION – ELECTRICAL SAFETY TEST/INSPECTION

Members **Noted** that the annual test was carried out in February, and that BG Electrical have recommended a 3 year interval for the next inspection. There were no serious code C2 recommendations found which means the report is satisfactory, but there are three C3's which BG Electrical recommend completing, at a cost of £150 plus VAT.

1. Replace pull switch in shower (this is liable to break very soon, if used)
2. Replace 4 no. spurs to switched (all heaters have no local isolation)
3. Replace time lag switch (stiff to operate)

Cllrs proposed, seconded and resolved that **“the quote from BG Electrical for £150 plus VAT to rectify the three C3 issues be accepted”**. This was **Agreed**.

The Clerk was asked to request a quote from BG to replace the fans in the heaters in both the home and away changing rooms. Cllrs proposed, seconded and resolved that **“a budget of £200 + VAT be set for the supply and fit of the changing room heater fans”**. This was **Agreed**. The Clerk was further asked to request a quote from BG for a yearly inspection to test the red's and a visual inspection on the equipment. Cllr Waring to arrange a quote for fixing (possibly re-hanging) the swollen changing room door.

13. SNOW/ICE ISSUES

Members **Noted** that several complaints had been received following the snow last month. Members discussed the lack of gritting/snow ploughing on Chart Hill Road and in the village, despite this being a bus route. It appears that although Highways have contracted someone locally to clear the snow, this was not carried out. Cllrs Forknall & Waring agreed to use their snow ploughs to clear the snow in future, if required. The Clerk was asked to contact Eric Hotson for his assistance with making Warmlake Road, Amber Lane and Brishing Road a priority, as this is a bus route. Additionally, to request that Chart Hill Road is made a secondary route, due to the dangerous nature during icy conditions. Finally, can Highways provide Cllr Forknall with a contract to clear the snow in future?

14. MATTERS OF REPORT

14.1 County and Borough Councillors Report

Borough Cllr Steve Munford thanked Cllrs for their responses regarding the forthcoming Ward Cluster meeting. Cllr Munford has requested that Parish Council Chairmen be invited to future meetings. Cllr Munford gave an overview of the Local Plan review, and advised that the Regulation 19 consultation would be around September. Cllr Munford confirmed that Borough, County and Parish Council elections would be going ahead on 6th May this year, and, as he is so involved in the Local Plan review, he will be standing again. However, he will not be canvassing door to door. Chart Sutton Parish Councillors are up for election this year and nomination papers have to be with MBC by 8th April. County Cllr Eric Hotson apologised for his late attendance, as he was attending another meeting. Cllr Hotson advised that he has liaised with Cllr Forknall regarding the flooding issues on the B2163. Cllr Hotson will be standing for election this year, but will also not be canvassing door to door.

14.2 Chairman's Report

Cllr Forknall reported on the building work being carried out in the vicinity of Peacock Farm, Chart Hill Road. This has been reported, both by a neighbour and Cllr Waring, and the Enforcement team are looking into it. Members discussed the works being carried out at Thrift, Plough Wents Road, which was reported to Enforcement last summer. Cllr FitzGerald to provide the Clerk with information from Enforcement, in order that this can be followed up in need. Cllr Waring asked that a notice be put in the Village Newsletter to encourage residents to report Planning/Highways/PROW etc issues directly.

14.3 Individual Councillor's Reports

Cllr FitzGerald gave an update on the feeder bus pilot scheme, which will continue until at least July. Cllr FitzGerald reported that the support for those having online problems with the 2021 Census seemed inadequate. This may affect quite a few people in our parish without PC access if they haven't requested a paper copy. Cllr Webb reported that the concrete post/rails on Green Lane have been replaced/repared. Sean Charlton's reservoir is now full. Bardsley's Farm have submitted a planning application to upgrade a water treatment plant, which will not be objected to by the local community, however, the Environment Agency have raised questions. Cllrs Webb and Waring recently attended the Flood Warden training. As volunteers, they will be the eyes and ears only & will be responsible for relaying information.

14.4 Clerk's Report

14.4.1 Clerk's Annual Leave

Members **Noted** the Clerk's annual leave dates and Cllrs proposed, seconded and resolved that **"the Clerk be permitted to carry 5 extra days leave from the 2020/21 entitlement to 2021/22, due to cancellation of leave/workload during the Covid-19 pandemic"**. This was **Agreed**.

14.4.2 PSS Grant

Members **Noted** that MBC have confirmed that the PSS Grant for 2021/22 will be £1,931.00 (an increase of £48.00 from 2020/21).

15. FINANCE

15.1 Budget Monitoring

The Budget Monitoring Report to 28th February 2021 was **Noted**.

15.2 To note Income received since last meeting

Members **Noted** payments received during the period as follows:

HSBC Interest Jan 21	£0.50
HSBC Interest Feb 21	£0.44
Tfr from BMM to C/A 25/01/21	£2000.00
Tfr from BMM to C/A 25/02/21	£2000.00

15.3 To approve payments already made

Cllrs proposed, seconded and resolved **"that the following payments should be ratified"**. This was **Agreed**.

D/D – NEST – employer/employee pension payment for Jan	£158.80
SO – T Jenkins – Net Salary & Office Allowance – Jan	£708.16
D/D – NEST – employer/employee pension payment for Feb	£158.80

15.4 To resolve to make payments as presented for signature

Cllrs proposed, seconded and resolved **"that the Council approve the following payments"**. This was **Agreed**.

101645 – Miss T Jenkins – expenses Jan/Feb	£128.10
101646 – Adam Whitehead – Litterpick – Jan/Feb 21	£84.00
101647 – Maidstone Borough Council - Sweep/Litterpick Jan 21	£84.02
101648 – M FitzGerald – Feb VN production	£360.00
101649 – BG Electrical Contractors (Pavilion – annual test)	£276.00
101650 – M FitzGerald - printing costs re MBC Winter Grant	£65.00
101651 – Chart Sutton Community Together Initiative (refund to shop re MBC Winter Grant payments)	£120.00
101652 – Action with Communities in Rural Kent – annual membership	£55.00
101654 – Maidstone Borough Council - Sweep/Litterpick Feb 21	£84.02
101655 – EDF – pavilion electricity	£29.59

15.5 Statement of Internal Control

Members reviewed the Statement of Internal Control produced by the Clerk. Cllrs proposed, seconded and resolved **"that the Statement of Internal Control is signed and included with the year-end accounts"**. This was **Agreed** and it was further **Agreed** that Cllr Forknall and the Clerk should sign the Statement.

15.6 Annual Review of Effectiveness of Internal Audit

In carrying out its Annual Review, Members confirmed that the internal auditor is independent of the Council and has no involvement in the financial decision making and is competent to carry out an effective audit of the Council's system of internal control; that the review and scope of the internal audit adequately assesses the Council's internal controls and management of risk; that Members understand the importance of the relationship between the internal audit and the Council and that adequate preparations are made for the audit procedure and reports received from the Internal and External Auditor are actioned when necessary.

15.7 Annual Review of Clerk's Salary & Office Allowance and Employers Pension Contributions

Cllrs proposed, seconded and resolved **“that the Clerk's salary should increase from 1st April 2021 in line with the one point rise to Spinal Column Point 21, an increase of £196.56 per annum, together with an increase in the Clerk's office allowance to £510 per annum, and an increase in the employer's pension contribution to £9.48 per month.”** This was **Agreed**.

15.8 Annual Grounds Maintenance Contract

Members considered the 3% uplift in the 2021 quote. Cllrs proposed, seconded and resolved **“to accept the Landscape Services quotation for 2021”**. This was **Agreed**. However, as in previous years the Clerk was asked to write to Landscape Services to confirm the tasks that should only be carried out upon specific request by the Parish Council. Cllrs further proposed, seconded and resolved **“that additional items for 2021 to be included were:- top up the football goal mouth; overseed the whole pitch; fertilise in spring and autumn; selective weed killing”**. This was **Agreed**.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members **Noted** the next Meeting will be held on Monday 19th April 2021 either at Chart Sutton Village Hall or via Zoom

There being no further matters to be discussed, the meeting closed at 9.06pm.